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Chairman: Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka)

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Hearing of organizations and individuals having a special interest in the question

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 84: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/48/20, A/48/221 and A/48/365)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that International Space Year 1992, which had marked the tenth anniversary of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82), had been important for international cooperation in the practical applications of space technology, particularly in the field of environment. That same year the General Assembly had adopted its resolution 47/68, the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space; the adoption of the principles had been the fruitful conclusion of 12 years of work in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. With the end of the cold war, the international community had an opportunity to revitalize cooperation in space activities.

2. The Committee had contributed to the development of international space law. Five international treaties and four sets of legal principles relating to space activities had been adopted, which was a significant accomplishment.

3. Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria), speaking as the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, introduced the report of the Committee on the work of its thirty-sixth session (A/48/20), which had dealt with ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirtieth session, the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, the report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-second session and spin-off benefits of space technology.

4. The Committee had considered, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes in accordance with the General Assembly's request contained in its resolution 47/67, which demonstrated the international community's interest in promoting cooperation in that area. International Space Year had provided an excellent opportunity to broaden international cooperation in space activities. During the consideration of the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, the Committee had dealt with such important matters as the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and coordination of space activities within the United Nations system, remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, space and Earth environment, and the use of nuclear power sources in outer space.

5. He reported on the work of the Committee on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and the United Nations Programme on Space Applications (A/48/20, paras. 23 to 35), coordination of space activities within the United Nations system (paras. 44 to 46), remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, including its applications for the developing countries (paras. 49 to 54), the use of nuclear power sources in outer space and space transportation systems (paras. 55 to 66), the geostationary orbit, life sciences, including space medicine, progress in the geosphere-biosphere (global change) programme, and matters relating to planetary exploration and astronomy (paras. 67 to 77).

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee that the new theme fixed for special attention at the 1994 session of the Subcommittee should be "Space applications for disaster prevention, warning, mitigation and relief", as well as the recommendation that the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) should be invited to arrange an international symposium on that theme, in liaison with Member States. The theme was particularly relevant since the devastation caused by the recent earthquake in India had illustrated the need for increased international cooperation in that area.

6. In the field of space and Earth environment (paras. 83 to 89), he noted that the Committee had decided to place the issue of space debris on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and highlighted the report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-second session (paras. 90 to 113). The Committee had noted with satisfaction that, following many years of hard work, the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space had been adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/68. The Working Group on that question, which had been re-established to discuss possible revisions, had conducted a preliminary exchange of views. It had been agreed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should consider the need for revision in the light of changing technology.

7. There was still a variety of views on the question of the definition and the delimitation of outer space. The decision of the Subcommittee to consider circulating among Member States a questionnaire concerning aerospace objects had been a positive development.

8. While there had been a substantial exchange of views on the geostationary orbit, he regretted that the industrialized countries and the developing countries remained divided. On the other hand, a great deal of progress had been made in the Committee's discussions on the question of outer space benefits. The working group on that item had considered a draft set of "Principles regarding international cooperation in the exploration and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes", which had been submitted by the Group of 77.

9. The spin-off benefits of space technology, discussed in paragraphs 114 to 120 of the Committee's report, were yielding substantial benefits in a wide variety of fields. The Committee had recognized the need to examine ways to expand international cooperation to ensure that all countries, in particular the developing countries, had equal access to those emerging technologies. The Committee was considering the possibility of holding a third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (paras. 123 and 124).

10. The Committee had taken note of the decisions of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General to relocate the Office for Outer Space Affairs to the United Nations Office at Vienna as part of the restructuring of the Secretariat, and had also noted the decision to give the Office for Outer Space Affairs responsibility for servicing the Committee and the subcommittees. The Committee had decided to hold its 1994 meetings and those of its subsidiary bodies in

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Vienna, in accordance with the rule contained in General Assembly resolution 40/243.

11. The Committee had not been able to reach a consensus on the expansion of its membership, and he had been requested to continue consultations. A limited enlargement of the Committee, regionally balanced and based on proposals of the various regional groups, would be appropriate.

12. Space technology would become an increasingly important mechanism for solving such problems as environmental degradation and sustainable development, which transcended national boundaries and ideologies.

13. Mr. MISHRA (India) noted that the international community had an obligation to preserve outer space as the common heritage of mankind and to help developing countries to benefit from the peaceful uses of outer space.

14. India, which had conducted its first flight of a polar satellite launch vehicle at the beginning of 1993, had made remarkable progress with respect to space technology, on which it placed a high priority; satellites played an essential role in the development of that technology in such areas as communications, remote sensing, early warning systems, meteorology and the exploration of natural resources. The goal of India's programme was to enable the country to achieve an independent capability to launch remote-sensing satellites. He deplored the measures which certain groups were taking to deprive developing countries of the technology necessary for the achievement of progress in that area, even though those countries were prepared to establish regimes guaranteeing the proper utilization of the technology.

15. With respect to the work of COPUOS and its Subcommittees, he welcomed the decision taken by the Committee to include the question of space debris in the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the spirit of compromise which the members of the Committee had shown.

16. After many years of work within the Committee, the General Assembly had in 1992 adopted the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. Those principles should be translated into concrete action to bolster the confidence of the international community and to allay its fears. The review of those principles envisaged by the General Assembly to take account of emerging nuclear-power applications and evolving international recommendations on radiological protection should build on the progress achieved to date and not undermine it, and to bring the recommendations into line with those of the International Commission on Radiation Protection (ICRP). The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should examine the need for any revision of the principles in the light of changing technology. The Legal Subcommittee should make rapid progress in its consideration of the other items on its agenda, especially those relating to the benefits of space technology and the definition and utilization of the geostationary orbit.

17. His delegation supported the decision of the Committee that the thirty-third session of the Legal Subcommittee should be held at the United Nations Office at Vienna; however, decisions regarding future meetings should be taken

(Mr. Mishra, India)

in the light of the views expressed by developing countries which were not represented at Vienna.

18. With regard to the question of the representation of developing countries within COPUOS, he noted that many countries had made considerable progress in recent years in activities related to the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. Equitable geographic representation could help to promote the objectives of the Committee and of the United Nations. India therefore supported the candidature of Kazakhstan for membership.

19. With regard to the holding of a third UNISPACE Conference, his delegation was pleased to note that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had initiated consultations on that question. There had been significant achievements since the previous Conference and those achievements needed to be reviewed in the light of the new opportunities for international cooperation. The momentum for cooperation that had been created by the International Space Year and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development must be maintained. Space technology could contribute to the solution of the acute problems faced by developing countries. Several delegations had proposed that the third UNISPACE Conference should be held in a developing country and India reiterated its offer to host it.

20. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria) said that, at first glance, the progress achieved in 1993 might appear to be modest, but that the work done during the year was significant inasmuch as it related to a period of consolidation of recent achievements and of reflection regarding the courses to be followed in the future. The Committee's deliberations in 1993 had provided an opportunity to take stock of the agreement which had been concluded in 1992, after particularly long and difficult negotiations, on the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. Moreover, the Committee had finally reached agreement, after extensive preparatory work, on the inclusion of the question of space debris in the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. In view of the risks associated with the proliferation of space debris, that decision was of no small importance.

21. Since the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in space activities for enhancing security in the post-cold-war era (A/48/221) had not been issued until July, the Committee had not had an opportunity to give it the careful attention it deserved. The Committee would no doubt bear some of the report's thought-provoking ideas in mind when it took up the question of the possibility of holding a third UNISPACE Conference - a project which Austria supported.

22. Austria had never spared any effort to promote international cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space and had acted as host to several meetings and seminars on that topic. For that reason, he welcomed the decision taken by the General Assembly to relocate the Office for Outer Space Affairs to the United Nations Office at Vienna.

23. Mr. DEWEZ (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, stressed the importance that the European Community and its member States attached to the work of COPUOS. The end of the cold war had

(Mr. Dewez, Belgium)

enabled the Committee to carry out more effectively the role of catalyst and coordinator which the General Assembly had assigned to it. In order to enable the Committee to continue its activities along those lines, a draft resolution should be prepared setting out the Committee's mandate for 1994. In addition, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should consider the possibility of revising the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. The European Community and its member States would follow with interest the work done by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the question of space debris.

24. He emphasized the important contribution which space sciences could make to the solution of environmental problems, and said that the European Community and its member States would like to have that topic included in the Committee's agenda.

25. The Committee should also consider the work which still remained to be done to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. The European Community and its member States commended the efforts made by the United Nations Expert on Space Applications with a view to creating regional centres for space applications in close consultation with existing research centres. European efforts at both the national and the multilateral levels, for example through the European Space Agency (ESA), had taken the form of, inter alia, seminars and training workshops organized for the benefit of the international scientific community on a broad range of topics. The European Community and its member States supported the activities which COPUOS was conducting to encourage exchanges of knowledge and experience in fields ranging from telecommunications to life sciences, and hoped that those activities would continue. Those efforts should be coordinated at the international level in order to ensure the greatest benefit for all humanity.

26. Mr. RYDBERG (Sweden), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in space activities for enhancing security in the post-cold-war era (A/48/221), said he regarded it as an important document which should stimulate the debate on the role of space technology in the light of recent political and technological changes. In his report, the Secretary-General rightly emphasized the dual nature of space technology, much of which could be used for military as well as civilian purposes. It was important, therefore, to promote its use for peaceful purposes while also preventing the proliferation of destabilizing weapons systems.

27. Recalling the agreement reached in 1992 on the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, he said that a revision of those principles should be undertaken only if it would be likely to lead to a significant strengthening of the protection provided by the principles.

28. Sweden welcomed the Committee's decision to include the issue of space debris in the agenda of its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Since it was impossible, for both technical and economic reasons, to clean up space debris, that was an area where prevention was required, there being no cure. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should therefore proceed without delay to examine the various strategies currently applied in order to minimize the production of additional space debris.

(Mr. Rydberg, Sweden)

29. The Subcommittee was the forum for international exchanges of information and experience with regard to space activities. His delegation saw no conflict between that role and the Subcommittee's main function, which was to lay the ground for the adoption of standards governing international cooperation in space activities.

30. Sweden had contributed to the Committee's work by submitting a technical presentation on its experience in the field of small satellites. In addition, it was continuing to organize training courses on remote-sensing techniques, the fourth of which would take place in 1994.

31. With regard to the possibility of holding a third UNISPACE conference, his delegation felt the question should be given more careful consideration since a great deal was at stake.

32. It would also be useful to carry out a critical evaluation of the work of the Legal Subcommittee in order to improve its effectiveness. In that connection, Sweden welcomed the decision to adopt a more flexible approach to the Subcommittee's schedule of work and the duration of its future sessions.

33. Sweden trusted that the Committee would soon complete its review of the question of its membership and it commended the efforts of the Chairman of the Committee to find a universally acceptable solution.

34. Ms. ASHRAF (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that over the years UNESCO had acquired extensive expertise in space applications through its many training programmes and scientific and technical courses. As a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNESCO would emphasize its major scientific programmes in the fields of ecology and geology.

35. The value of remote sensing from outer space and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for environmental protection and the management of natural resources was clear. UNESCO continued to assist all member States, especially the developing countries, in their efforts to use space technology for economic, social and cultural development. For instance, cooperation had been established between UNESCO and several space agencies as part of a cartographic project on the silk roads.

36. Remote sensing and GIS could be valuable tools for policy-makers concerned with environmental and development problems. Yet, despite technological advances, diminishing costs and increasing user-friendliness, their potential had not so far been fully realized. Resource managers around the world needed to know exactly what data were available, not only about their own country but also on regional, continental and even global levels. An effort should therefore be made to standardize data collection and archiving procedures.

37. It was well known that remote sensing and GIS could have a multitude of applications, but in order to profit fully from them, it was essential to increase the exchange of technical and scientific data, to carry out transfers of technology and exchanges of experts, to guarantee everyone access to remote-

(Ms. Ashraf, UNESCO)

sensing data, ground stations and digital-image processing and, above all, to develop human resources in the developing countries.

38. UNESCO was aware that the transfer of knowledge and know-how was increasingly the key to sustainable development and it had organized many training and post-graduate courses for scientists from all over the world in such diverse fields as remote sensing, geology, oceanography and ecology.

AGENDA ITEM 38: ELIMINATION OF APARTHEID AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNITED, DEMOCRATIC AND NON-RACIAL SOUTH AFRICA

Hearing of organizations and individuals having a special interest in the question (A/C.4/48/5 and Add.1 to 8)

39. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the General Assembly had decided that agenda item 38 would be considered in plenary meeting, on the understanding that the representatives of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and of national liberation movements recognized by that Organization would be permitted to participate in the discussion and that those individuals and organizations having a special interest in the question would be permitted to be heard by the Fourth Committee.

40. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Pheko (Pan Africanist Congress of Azania) took his place at the table.

41. Mr. PHEKO (Pan Africanist Congress of Azania), after reviewing the principal developments in South Africa's colonial history, recalled that the four British colonies, the Cape, the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and Natal, had been united only as a means of more effectively fighting the indigenous peoples and that the admission of South Africa to the League of Nations in 1919, and subsequently to the United Nations in 1945, had not been accompanied by the decolonization of that country, whose current international status was a violation of jus cogens. Under the Native Land Act of 1913, only 13 per cent of the land had been reserved for the Africans. Those "native reserves" had later become homelands.

42. The changes in the situation in South Africa, which were causing euphoria abroad, were only superficial. The genocide of the African people by the minority regime was continuing. In 1992 alone, 20,135 Africans had been killed in South Africa. In July and August 1993, 1,159 people had been killed. PAC had abstained from the decision to set up the Transitional Executive Council because it gave the minority regime exclusive powers over the army and the police. On 8 October 1993, the United Nations General Assembly had decided to lift economic sanctions against South Africa even while the regime was continuing to oppress the Africans. The lifting of the sports boycott in 1991 had not been followed by any improvement in the situation. PAC believed that the negotiations should be conducted by a neutral convener and preferably on neutral territory. It had always had in mind that they should take place within the framework of the United Nations or the Organization of African Unity. Negotiations in a neutral venue would make it possible to guarantee the security of the negotiators and prevent any interference.

43. The interim arrangements concluded with the De Klerk regime were aimed only at prolonging colonial rule. The idea that South Africa was an independent and sovereign country must be rejected. Only Azania's decolonization would make it possible to resolve the political conflict.

44. Mr. Pheko withdrew.

45. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. Donna Katzin (Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility) took a place at the table.

46. Mrs. KATZIN (Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)) congratulated the General Assembly on its adoption of resolution 48/1, lifting the economic sanctions which had been imposed on South Africa. The international community must strive to find means of lending support to the establishment of a political and economic democracy and the United Nations must help to organize free and fair elections in South Africa. On the economic front, the task of the transitional government to be elected in April 1994 would be difficult in the extreme. The government's success would determine the survival of the country's first democratically elected administration. The international community, whether governmental and non-governmental organizations or United Nations agencies, had a very important role to play. It was to be hoped that IMF and the World Bank would provide support without imposing over-strict structural adjustment requirements. The private sector could help to build a viable and more just society by respecting the Code of Conduct for Business Operating in South Africa drawn up by the South African Council of Churches (SACC).

47. In the banking sector, discriminatory practices still prevailed. The international community should intervene to facilitate the black population's access to credit. The Fourth Committee should explore ways in which United Nations bodies could encourage participatory and sustainable development and promote responsible investment in South Africa, in cooperation with the governmental and non-governmental organizations of Member States working to promote South Africa's democratic development.

48. Mrs. Katzin withdrew.

49. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. Eve A. Thompson (Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law) took a place at the table.

50. Mrs. THOMPSON (Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law) said that on 23 September 1993 the South African Parliament had passed the law establishing the Transitional Executive Council, the primary institution that would oversee the transition to democracy in South Africa. She emphasized that, as far as power-sharing was concerned, concessions on both sides had led to an agreement on a Government of National Unity. The terms of that arrangement were to be entrenched in an interim constitution to be passed at the end of November. The African National Congress had recently succeeded in persuading the National Party to give up the idea of minority veto power over majority decisions.

51. In regard to regional powers, ANC had finally agreed to the idea of regional governments which would have jurisdiction in such fields as education,

(Mrs. Thompson)

police and health. An unelected multi-party forum had formulated the constitutional principles on which the work of the future Constituent Assembly would be based.

52. Some obstacles remained to be removed before the elections of 27 April 1994, the most important being the refusal of many parties to take part in the work of the Transitional Executive Council and in the elections. Another problem was the persistence of violence, which could keep a large proportion of the black population from voting. Reconstruction and the redistribution of resources must become economic priorities. The task would be extremely complex because the privileged population would not surrender their privileges without continued pressure.

53. Mrs. Thompson withdrew.

54. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. von Roemer (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) took a place at the table.

55. Mrs. VON ROEMER (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)) said that her organization welcomed the decision to establish a Transitional Executive Council in South Africa to prepare for the elections to be held on 27 April 1994. It also welcomed the call by Mr. Mandela for the lifting of economic sanctions. The acts of intimidation and violence currently being committed in South Africa, which might severely impede the process of democracy, were clearly aimed at the trade union movement, one of the pillars of the future democracy, their purpose being to destabilize its activities. Workers and their trade unions were being subjected to violence for political reasons. Collusion between employers and the police and security forces was still commonplace. She cited a number of examples illustrating the dangers to which the leaders and members of the democratic trade union movement were exposed daily.

56. In February 1993, ICFTU had sent a fact-finding mission composed of 50 trade unionists to South Africa to investigate the intimidation and violence, and to examine how best to extend solidarity to the trade union movement. The mission, which had been guided in its task by two trade unions, COSATU and NACTU, had emphasized the urgent need for the international community to provide financial, political and moral support to democratic forces. In order to succeed, the political transition must be accompanied by profound social and economic reform. The mission had made a number of recommendations, calling for a numerical strengthening of international observer teams, which should include women, and a reaffirmation of their mandate, the stationing of observer teams at flash points of violence and regular reporting of all their activities. Police should receive training that would enable them to counsel women who were victims of violence and rape. The mission had also called on South African employers to play a role in addressing violence and in hastening the democratic process through participation in peace structures and dispute resolution committees, and providing material support for the victims of violence. It had voiced special concern about the massive violations of trade union and human rights in the homelands. Pursuant to the recommendations of the mission, an ICFTU Observer Group on Violence in South Africa had been formed which was composed of representatives of ICFTU affiliates stationed in the country who would work closely with COSATU and NACTU. The ICFTU Committee on Human and Trade Union

(Mrs. von Roemer)

Rights, in keeping with one of the mission's recommendations, had recommended that mass assistance should be made available to the democratic trade union movement and to other democratic forces in the field of voter education and political tolerance by means of seminars and similar projects.

57. The ICFTU mission had urged the South African Government to commit itself to a climate of free political activity and had urged the establishment of an independent electoral mechanism to ensure that elections would be free and fair.

58. Mrs. von Roemer withdrew.

59. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. Burrows (NGO Committee on Southern Africa) took a place at the table.

60. Mrs. BURROWS (NGO Committee on Southern Africa) said that the elections to be held on 27 April 1994, a date which must remain unchanged, would signal a new era in South Africa, leading to the end of apartheid and the creation of a united, non-racial democratic society. The escalating violence which had claimed almost 4,000 black lives was a danger to the holding of free and fair elections. As the guarantor of security, the De Klerk Government bore the responsibility for ending the violence. The role of the South African defence forces and of the police in provoking violence had been documented, inter alia, in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation in South Africa. Observer teams had been established in the context of the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa and by the European Community, the Commonwealth nations and the Organization of African Unity. Mandated by the Security Council, the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa had helped to defuse tensions and strengthen the peace-building structures set up in national and local bodies by the National Peace Accord. It was hoped that 100 monitors would soon be in place, but at least 400 monitors would be a more reasonable figure. The responsibility for achieving just solutions to the myriad problems in South Africa was primarily a matter for the people of that country; however, the international community must not relinquish its oversight role or its responsibility. The social and economic development needs of the black communities posed a challenge to the global community. Food security, job security and security in general were indispensable elements in the process of social transformation to a free society that would be able to take control of its own destiny and respond to the needs of its citizens. The elections were less than five months away, and there was an urgent need for voter education programmes that could reach all groups, including the illiterate and the rural populations. Democratic values must be fostered in order to allow for the establishment of a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

61. With regard to the monitoring of elections, she said that around 15,000 observers would be needed; they could come from the local community or from non-governmental organizations. The Namibia experience could serve as a model. With the draft transitional constitution nearly finalized, a number of bodies (the Transitional Executive Council, the Independent Electoral Commission, the Independent Broadcasting Authority, the Independent Media Commission) must become operational soon.

(Mrs. Burrows)

62. The international community, which had been vigilant for many years, must continue to meet its responsibility to the black majority in South Africa as the latter faced the difficult task ahead. At its last Conference, the International Labour Organization had called for the repeal of the remaining apartheid legislation, including the Electoral Act of 1979, and the extension of basic labour legislation to cover workers in the bantustans, who continued to be denied trade union rights, as well as to domestic workers, farm workers and workers in the public sector. The National Party Government had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the new Government would face the task of creating a non-sexist society. Women for Women in Government was a campaign aimed at placing a substantial number of women in the first democratically elected Parliament, and international NGOs could play a significant role in that initiative by sending women parliamentarians to the most remote regions. The Special Committee against Apartheid might reactivate its Task Force on Women and Children, whose expertise could assist the new Government with preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development and the fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in 1995.

63. In conclusion, she urged the international community to continue to give priority to the question of South Africa.

64. Mrs. Burrows withdrew.

65. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Bjornlund (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs) took a place at the table.

66. Mr. BJORNLUND (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)) said that the organization to which he belonged, which was affiliated with the Democratic Party of the United States, worked to promote and strengthen democratic institutions in new and emerging democracies. Drawing on its experience in more than 60 countries - and, for the last three years, in South Africa - NDI would like to make some suggestions on the role which the international community might play in promoting democracy in South Africa. In order to be effective, international assistance should target three key areas: voter education, political party building and monitoring of elections.

67. Public education was of critical importance: people had to be convinced that their vote was significant and must be made to feel that they would be safe when they did vote. In 1991, in collaboration with the South African Centre for Development Studies (University of the Western Cape), NDI had launched an initiative called Project Vote, which had worked with a number of South African non-governmental organizations.

68. International assistance to political parties was particularly important in South Africa, where liberation movements and homeland governments were being organized into political parties in anticipation of the country's first democratic elections. Strong and well-organized political parties were needed to cleanse the climate of intolerance and distrust engendered by a history of oppression.

(Mr. Biornlund)

69. Election monitoring should not be carried out exclusively by foreign organizations. In order to inspire greater public confidence, South African groups should participate in the monitoring of the election process. That would also increase the likelihood that the results of the vote would be accepted by all.

70. Recalling that the elections should be viewed as part of a much larger radical political transformation, he said that the United Nations should promote the success of the electoral process. Since South Africa already possessed the necessary infrastructure to hold elections, it would not need the technical and administrative assistance that the United Nations had so successfully provided in other countries. The United Nations should therefore ensure that it worked towards eliminating the most serious threat to the democratic future of the country: political violence and intimidation. It should also coordinate the activities of the many international observers expected for the elections by organizing briefings and dividing up the work to be done among the various participants.

71. Mr. Biornlund withdrew.

72. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Roques (City of London Anti-Apartheid Group) took a place at the table.

73. Mr. ROQUES (City of London Anti-Apartheid Group) said that the announcement of a date for the first non-racial elections in South Africa did not mean that the struggle to overcome white domination and apartheid was over. Since President De Klerk had come to power, no fundamental reforms had been introduced to improve the living conditions of the black majority: in fact, they had deteriorated.

74. No attempt was being made to address the problems of unemployment, education, health care and housing. Eight million people were without basic housing, about 90 per cent of black families, both urban and rural, were without electricity, and over 60 per cent of deaths among black children were caused by malnutrition; 17 million people lived below the poverty line, 6 to 7 million were unemployed, and over 80 per cent of the population had access to only 13 per cent of the land in the most barren areas of the country. Recently, the rate of unemployment among blacks had risen to 50 per cent and a massive programme of housing construction would be needed to provide decent housing for those living in the townships and shanty towns, in other words, the vast majority of the black population. Seven million children had little or no education and black people in general had very little access to health care. The next Government would have to eliminate the fundamental inequalities between the two population groups in South Africa. The land question could not be ignored.

75. The lifting of sanctions had been premature because they had helped to force the minority regime to negotiate; they should therefore remain in force until an elected democratic Government was in place. His organization was concerned about the secret bilateral agreements concluded within the framework

(Mr. Roques)

of negotiations between two parties which were regarded as representative of the people without having been elected. Any attempt to limit the sovereignty of the elected Constituent Assembly would be contrary to democratic principles. It was vital to demand that South Africa remain united. According to the September 1993 issue of Notes and documents, a publication of the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, acts of intimidation and violence constituted the single most important obstacle to the right to vote. The concentration of violence in certain areas clearly indicated that it was part of a campaign orchestrated by the regime. The United Nations should be prepared to monitor elections, as it had done in Namibia. An independent electoral commission should be established and should begin work immediately to draw up an electoral roll, inform voters and ensure maximum participation in the elections.

76. In conclusion, noting that most international solidarity organizations had given their support exclusively to the African National Congress (ANC), he said that the United Nations should consult with all the liberation movements, without exception, and that the Committee should hear the views of the organizations represented in South Africa which were opposed to the elections in order to evaluate whether their reservations were valid. In an October 1993 briefing with the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), the Anti-Apartheid Group had learned that AZAPO was following developments in the country very closely and campaigning for elections to be free and fair. The Committee should hear a representative of AZAPO. The assumption of power by a majority regime would be the only way to resolve the South African problem.

77. Mr. Roques withdrew.

78. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. Ifill (American Committee on Africa) took a place at the table.

79. Mrs. IFILL (American Committee on Africa) said that her organization, which had been able to mobilize a large number of sympathizers to support the sanctions during the 1980s, had welcomed Nelson Mandela's call for the lifting of the sanctions. The new phase in the struggle to ensure the establishment of democracy in South Africa was fraught with difficulties. It was vital to ensure that the elections were free and fair and to overcome the terrible legacy of apartheid.

80. Several programmes had been established, one of which had called for the involvement of prominent leaders from religious communities in the United States. Those leaders had forged links with their South African counterparts. That network (the Religious Action Network) was ready to promote the holding of free and fair elections, by pressuring the Government of the United States of America, and to support reconstruction after the elections. The American Committee on Africa was currently monitoring the progress being made by cities and states in the United States with regard to the lifting of the sanctions, and was working closely with several legislators. The Projects Director had recently gone to California where he had met with about 50 municipal treasurers. All of those sympathizers were anxious to support the democratic movement in South Africa by strengthening their ties with the South African people. The Action for Resisting Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid Fund (Africa Fund), a sister organization, was pursuing the same goals as the American Committee on

(Mrs. Ifill)

Africa, whose recent publications were intended to educate the American people about the complexities of the election process in South Africa, about issues regarding South African women and about the democratic movement in that country.

81. Mrs. Ifill withdrew.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.